

ADAMS. Housekeepers of the Globe.



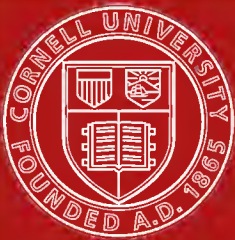
PR  
2020  
A22

PR  
2920  
A22

# THE HOUSEKEEPERS OF THE GLOBE

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS

Reprinted for private circulation from  
MODERN PHILOLOGY, Vol. XVII, No. 1, May 1919



Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

# Modern Philology

VOLUME XVII

May 1919

NUMBER I

*Adams, Joseph Quincy*

## THE HOUSEKEEPERS OF THE GLOBE

The Globe playhouse was jointly operated by two distinct business organizations, the members of which were known respectively as the "housekeepers" and the "actors." The "housekeepers" were the proprietors of the building; the "actors" were the chief players of the troupe. The "housekeepers" at their own cost provided the theatre, and agreed to keep it in good repair.<sup>1</sup> In return for this they received one-half of the income from the galleries, boxes, and tiring-house door.<sup>2</sup> The "actors" not only did the bulk of the acting; they paid the wages of the hired men (i.e., those players, or "hirelings," who were not members of the "company," as the organization of "actors" was called), of the boys (who were needed to play the rôles of women), and of the musicians; provided all the costumes and properties; met the charges of the poets (who were sometimes paid by the play and sometimes engaged at a fixed salary); and settled for all the other expenses connected with operating the playhouse.<sup>3</sup> In return for this they received the other half of the income from the galleries, boxes, and tiring-house door, and, in addition, the whole of the income from the outer doors<sup>4</sup>—that is, the money paid for general admission, which, of course, did not include admission to the galleries and boxes.

<sup>1</sup> See the Petition of Benfield, Swanston, and Pollard, with the other documents relating thereto, printed by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of William Shakespeare*, eleventh edition, 1907 (hereafter referred to as *Petition*), pp. 313, 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 313, 317.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 313, 316.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 313, 317.

The two organizations, though distinct, were interlocking, for most of the "housekeepers" were also "actors." At first all the "housekeepers" were also "actors," except Cuthbert Burbage (who, in all probability, originated the scheme of the Globe, and was mainly responsible for the erection of the building). Later, however, at the death of some of the "housekeepers," who left their property to relatives or friends, a few outsiders were admitted. The practical result of this system of interlocking was the harmonious operation of the theatre for the mutual benefit of the two organizations.

Each organization distributed its profits by means of shares; but one must always carefully distinguish between shares in the house and shares in the company. Shakespeare is referring to shares in the company in *Hamlet*, III, ii, 289-94:

*Hamlet*: Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers,—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

*Horatio*: Half a share.

*Hamlet*: A whole one, I.

The present article deals only with the shares in the house.

The organization of the housekeepers was formed in December, 1598, by the two brothers, Richard and Cuthbert Burbage, for the specific purpose of erecting the Globe playhouse.<sup>1</sup> According to their plan the Globe property was to be divided into two separate and distinct moieties or halves; the one moiety was to be held by the Burbages as the originators of the scheme; the other moiety was to be held by five of the actors, probably chosen by the Burbages,<sup>2</sup> namely, William Shakespeare, John Heminges, Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, and William Kempe. When on February 21, 1599, the formal lease of the land was signed with Sir Nicholas Brend, this division into moieties was carefully observed; to the Burbages Sir Nicholas leased one-half of the property at a yearly rental of £7 5s., and to the actors he leased the other half at the same rate. The actors immediately took their moiety and, dividing it into five equal parts, proceeded to arrange their holdings in the form of a "joint tenancy."

<sup>1</sup> For a complete history of the erection of the Globe see Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> So Cuthbert Burbage states; see *Petition*, p. 317.

The distinction between the two moieties (one as the private property of the Burbages, the other as the property of the actors) was maintained until after the death of Richard Burbage. During all the intervening years the Burbages' moiety remained untouched; the actors' moiety, however, was subject to change at any time.

At the outset, then, the Globe property was divided into ten equal shares, distributed as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Richard Burbage . . . . .	2½
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	2½
William Shakespeare . . . . .	1
John Heminges . . . . .	1
Augustine Phillips . . . . .	1
Thomas Pope . . . . .	1
William Kempe . . . . .	1

In the early summer of 1599 William Kempe withdrew from the undertaking. The actors' moiety was promptly reorganized, and Kempe's share was divided equally among the remaining four.<sup>2</sup> The distribution of shares, therefore, at the time of the opening of the Globe in 1599 stood as follows:<sup>3</sup>

Richard Burbage . . . . .	2½
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	2½
William Shakespeare . . . . .	1½
John Heminges . . . . .	1½
Augustine Phillips . . . . .	1¼
Thomas Pope . . . . .	1¼

Early in 1604 Thomas Pope died, and by his will left his share to Mary Clark, alias Wood, and Thomas Bromley, to be held by them

<sup>1</sup> See the legal documents in the case of *Witter vs. Heminges and Condell*, printed by Charles William Wallace in *Shakespeare and His London Associates* (issued as *University Studies*, X, 305-36 [especially p. 53], published by the University of Nebraska). For the ability to trace in such detail the history of the Globe housekeepers we are in large measure indebted to the discovery by Mr. Wallace of these documents as well as the *Osteler vs. Heminges* documents, which not only supplement but also illuminate the wills of the actors, printed by Malone, Chalmers, and Collier, and the important *Petition* discovered and printed by J. O. Halliwell-Phillips.

<sup>2</sup> *Witter vs. Heminges and Condell*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> It is possible, of course, to conceive of the property as now consisting of eight shares, the Burbages holding two each, and the actors one each; but the legal documents still refer to the property as divided into ten shares as I have indicated; see, for example, *Witter vs. Heminges and Condell*, p. 54.

jointly.<sup>1</sup> Mary soon married the well-known actor John Edmonds, a member of Queen Anne's company. The share is thereafter referred to as being in the hands of "Basilus Nicoll [a scrivener, the executor of Pope's will, and here, possibly, representing Thomas Bromley, who was a minor<sup>2</sup>], John Edmonds, and Mary his wife."<sup>3</sup>

In May, 1605, Augustine Phillips died, and his share in the Globe passed to his widow.<sup>4</sup> Shortly afterward she married John Witter, who thenceforth held the share in his wife's right.<sup>5</sup>

At some date not long after July, 1605, two distinguished members of the company, William Sly and Henry Condell, were admitted to the actors' moiety. The shares were thereupon increased to twelve, distributed as follows:<sup>6</sup>

Richard Burbage . . . . .	3
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	3
William Shakespeare . . . . .	1
John Heminges . . . . .	1
Henry Condell . . . . .	1
William Sly . . . . .	1
Basilus Nicoll, etc. . . . .	1
John Witter . . . . .	1

In August, 1608, William Sly died, and by a nuncupative will<sup>7</sup> left his share in the Globe to Robert Brown, presumably the well-known actor. The share, however, soon passed, probably by purchase,

<sup>1</sup> For the will see J. P. Collier, *Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakespeare*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 128.

<sup>3</sup> See the Osteler *vs.* Heminges documents, printed by Mr. Wallace in the *Times*, London, October 2 and 4, 1909; in *Advance Sheets from Shakespeare, the Globe, and Blackfriars*, 1909; and in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. XLVI.

<sup>4</sup> See J. P. Collier, *Memoirs of the Principal Actors*, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Witter *vs.* Heminges and Condell, pp. 47-76.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Wallace is in error, I believe, when he says (e.g., in the *Times*, London, October 2, 1909) that Condell was not admitted as a sharer in the house until 1610, and that the number of shares in the Globe was not increased from the original ten until that year. The evidence on which I base my statement is clear and positive, and was discovered and printed by Mr. Wallace himself. It is to be found in the Witter *vs.* Heminges and Condell documents, pp. 49, 57.

<sup>7</sup> For the will see George Chalmers, *Apology*, p. 441.



to John Heminges and Henry Condell, and the distribution of the Globe property now stood:

Richard Burbage . . . . .	3
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	3
John Heminges . . . . .	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Henry Condell . . . . .	$1\frac{1}{2}$
William Shakespeare . . . . .	1
Basilus Nicoll, etc. . . . .	1
John Witter . . . . .	1

On February 20, 1611, the famous player William Osteler was admitted to the actors' moiety. This increased the total number of the shares to fourteen, which were distributed as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Richard Burbage . . . . .	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	$3\frac{1}{2}$
John Heminges . . . . .	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Henry Condell . . . . .	$1\frac{1}{2}$
William Shakespeare . . . . .	1
William Osteler . . . . .	1
Basilus Nicoll, etc. . . . .	1
John Witter . . . . .	1

On July 29, 1613, the destruction of the playhouse by fire led the housekeepers to erect at great expense the Second Globe. For this purpose an assessment of "£50 or £60" was made upon each share. John Witter, by failing to contribute his part when called upon, forfeited his share.<sup>2</sup> John Heminges, as the business manager, thereupon confiscated the share and gave one-half of it gratis to Henry Condell, each, of course, contributing the requisite assessment. Thus, after the rebuilding, the property was held as follows:<sup>3</sup>

Richard Burbage . . . . .	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	$3\frac{1}{2}$
John Heminges . . . . .	2
Henry Condell . . . . .	2
William Shakespeare . . . . .	1
William Osteler . . . . .	1
Basilus Nicoll, etc. . . . .	1

<sup>1</sup> Osteler *vs.* Hemings; Witter *vs.* Hemings and Condell, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Witter *vs.* Heminges and Condell, pp. 60, 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

On December 16, 1614, William Osteler died, and left his share to his wife, Thomasine, the young daughter of John Heminges. The share was promptly taken over by Heminges to manage for his daughter.<sup>1</sup>

On April 23, 1616, William Shakespeare died. The immediate disposition of his share is not known. He may have disposed of it before his death, for it is not mentioned in his will; but this assumption, of course, is not necessary. I cannot believe with Fleay<sup>2</sup> that his share passed to Cuthbert Burbage. There is no evidence for this opinion and much evidence against it. The share would naturally remain in the actors' moiety and in the hands of the actors themselves. Whatever was the immediate disposition of the share, evidence shows that it was ultimately divided between Heminges and Condell.

In 1617, or very soon thereafter,<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Field, who had joined the Globe company, was admitted into the actors' moiety, and the total number of shares was increased to sixteen.<sup>4</sup> The distribution, assuming that Shakespeare's share had by this time been divided between Heminges and Condell, was as follows:

Richard Burbage . . . . .	4
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	4
John Heminges . . . . .	2½
Henry Condell . . . . .	2½
Nathaniel Field . . . . .	1
Thomasine Osteler . . . . .	1
Basilus Nicoll, etc. . . . .	1

On March 13, 1619, Richard Burbage died, leaving his four shares to his widow,<sup>5</sup> who shortly married a Mr. Robinson.

Next, through the retirement of Nathaniel Field, and the disappearance of "Basilus Nicoll, John Edmonds, and Mary his wife,"<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Osteler vs. Heminges.

<sup>2</sup> *A Chronicle History of the London Stage*, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> I have not been able to determine the date exactly. Field was acting his *Amends for Ladies* at Rosseter's Blackfriars in January, 1617; the playhouse, however, was closed on January 27, and possibly Field joined the King's Men shortly after. See Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p. 346.

<sup>4</sup> Witter vs. Heminges and Condell, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> For his will see J. P. Collier, *Memoirs of the Principal Actors*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Probably when young Thomas Bromley, who held the share jointly with Mary Clark alias Wood, came of age, Basilus Nicoll, as executor of the will, sold the share to Heminges and Condell in order to settle up the estate.

and of Thomasine Osteler,<sup>1</sup> Heminges and Condell managed to get into their hands all of the actors' moiety.<sup>2</sup> The distribution of the sixteen shares stood thus:

Mrs. Robinson . . . . .	4
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	4
John Heminges . . . . .	4
Henry Condell . . . . .	4

In December, 1627, Henry Condell died, leaving his four shares to his widow.<sup>3</sup>

The only actor now represented among the housekeepers was John Heminges, and he, we are told, had "given over playing."<sup>4</sup> This was a state of affairs not originally contemplated, and, of course, far from desirable. Accordingly a reorganization was secured by which Joseph Taylor and John Lowin, the two most eminent members of the company, were admitted as housekeepers and each allotted two shares. This was accomplished by taking two shares from Mrs. Condell, one share from John Heminges, and half a share from Cuthbert Burbage and from Mrs. Robinson.<sup>5</sup> Thus for the first time the integrity of the Burbages' moiety was affected, and from now on, so far as I can discover, no distinction is made between the two moieties. The shares after the reorganization stood:

Mrs. Robinson . . . . .	3½
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	3½
John Heminges . . . . .	3
Mrs. Condell . . . . .	2
Joseph Taylor . . . . .	2
John Lowin . . . . .	2

On October 10, 1630, John Heminges died, and his three shares passed to his son William.<sup>6</sup> In 1633 William, being in pecuniary straits, sold one share to John Shanks, a member of the Globe

<sup>1</sup> For her suit against her father to recover the share, see the Osteler *vs.* Heminges documents.

<sup>2</sup> *Petition*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> See J. P. Collier, *Memoirs of the Principal Actors*, p. 145; *Petition*, p. 312.

<sup>4</sup> *Petition*, p. 316.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>6</sup> See his will, J. P. Collier, *Memoirs of the Principal Actors*, p. 73; *Petition*, p. 316.

company; and a year later, for the same reason, he sold the other two shares to Shanks.<sup>1</sup> The distribution now stood:

Mrs. Robinson . . . . .	3½
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	3½
John Shanks . . . . .	3
Mrs. Condell . . . . .	2
Joseph Taylor . . . . .	2
John Lowin . . . . .	2

The following year, 1635, three other members of the company, Robert Benfield, Eliard Swanston, and Thomas Pollard, believing that their "labours, according to their several ways and abilities," were equal to those of John Shanks, petitioned the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, the Lord Chamberlain, to be admitted as housekeepers to the Globe, suggesting that Cuthbert Burbage, Mrs. Robinson, and John Shanks each be required to sell them one share.<sup>2</sup> The petition was granted,<sup>3</sup> and the new distribution of the shares was as follows:

Mrs. Robinson . . . . .	2½
Cuthbert Burbage . . . . .	2½
Mrs. Condell . . . . .	2
John Shanks . . . . .	2
Joseph Taylor . . . . .	2
John Lowin . . . . .	2
Robert Benfield . . . . .	1
Eliard Swanston . . . . .	1
Thomas Pollard . . . . .	1

So far as our knowledge goes this was the final disposition of the shares. The lease which the housekeepers held from Brend was rapidly drawing to a close; indeed, Brend sought to regain possession of his property on December 25, 1635, but the housekeepers brought suit in the Court of Requests and forced an extension of the lease until December 25, 1644. The outbreak of the Civil War, however, put an end to the usefulness of the Globe before that date. Brend, it would seem, did not wait for the lease to expire, but "on Monday the 15 of April, 1644," pulled down the building "to make tenements in the room of it."<sup>4</sup>

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

<sup>1</sup> *Petition*, pp. 312, 313, 314, 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 314.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>4</sup> The manuscript notes in the Phillipp's copy of Stow's *Annals*; see *The Academy*, October 28, 1882, p. 314.





Cornell University Library  
**PR 2920.A22**

**The housekeepers of the Globe.**



3 1924 013 151 646

